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Paper Reports Agreement on Hughes Estate

PHILADELPHIA, Aug. 14 (UPI)—Attorneys for the late Howard Hughes have worked out a secret agreement to split up the Hughes estate among 19 potential heirs should no valid will be recognized, the Philadelphia Inquirer reported in today's editions.

The agreement was worked out among opposing factions of the Hughes family, the newspaper said. The 19 persons involved are first cousins.

The Inquirer identified an attorney for three of the heirs as Keith A. Pursel of Los Angeles. When asked about details of the agreement, the report quoted Pursel as saying, "Well, I can tell you that an agreement has been reached, but I don't think I should go into it at this time."

The story said the agreement provides for the distribution of about 75 per cent of Hughes' estate to the 16 first cousins on his mother's side and the remainder to the three first cousins on his father's side.

The agreement was reached presuming no valid will was found, the Inquirer said. More than three dozen wills have been submitted to courts in four states.

The report said attorneys have also succeeded in preventing the Texas attorney general's office from examining autopsy reports on Hughes, which might reveal whether any criminal negligence was involved in his death. The report may also tell if Hughes had been mentally incompetent for any length of time.

Hughes, died April 5, at age 70 while aboard a flight from Acapulco to Houston. His body weighed 94 pounds upon arrival at a Houston hospital that same day.